



## Thank You

Thank you to all Network 2 employees, for your hard work and dedication this past year. Through your efforts, we continue to provide our veterans with excellent health care. I look forward to working with you in the new year.

Lawrence H. Flesh, MD  
Interim Network Director



## Satisfaction Performance Measures

Network 2 strives to achieve the highest quality and satisfaction on behalf of our veteran patients. One of the ways we do this is through Baldrige Criteria - which helps us strive for the highest level of excellence in the health care industry.

Network 2 surpassed all VA Networks nationally for quality and veteran satisfaction performance measures. Placing greater emphasis on wellness and prevention, we achieved VHA's highest scores for the Prevention Index, while also leading VA in screening for colorectal, breast and cervical cancer. Network 2 also led VHA in controlling hypertension, management of Ischemic heart disease through aspirin and beta-blocker administration, as well as in screening for major depressive disorders. In addition to generating quality scores at the highest level of VHA, Network 2 surpassed the performance of the highest rated U.S. health plans, surpassing the 90th percentile in prevention, cancer screening, cardiac care, diabetes, hypertension and behavioral health management.

Our Network also led VHA's inpatient satisfaction in 2002 with 78.3% of veterans rating care excellent or very good, well above the VHA mean of 72% and the U.S. community rate of 70%. Network 2 demonstrated VHA's highest patient satisfaction for "Access to Care" at 83.9%, 10 points above the VHA average, while also leading VHA with 82% of all patients seen within 20 minutes of appointment, as compared to the VHA average of 65%.

## New Councils Formed

Over the past few months, the Network has been evaluating the Information Systems Councils. As a result of this evaluation process, the following changes have been made:

**Strategic Information Council (SIC)** - This council will act as the oversight committee for all Network-level Information Systems committees, including: EMR/HIMS, Data Quality, VISTA Imaging, ADPAC, Telemedicine, and the IS JCAHO workgroup. The SIC will be key in the strategic planning efforts for Information Systems and will define expectations and accountability for the other Information Systems committees. **Mary-Ellen Piche**, Albany VA Medical Center Director, will chair this council.

**EMR/HIMS Committees** - These committees will merge to better streamline and coordinate our efforts in these areas. **Don Leben**, Bath Geriatrics and Extended Care Line Manager and **Dr. Krishna Sharma**, Canandaigua Physician will Co-Chair this new committee.

These groups will be evaluating and refining their charters and membership over the next several weeks.

## Awards and Recognition

- **Ed Cretaro**, Clinical Pharmacist at the Stratton VA Medical Center (VAMC) has passed the certification exam for anticoagulation management. He is now designated as a Certified Disease State Manager in Anticoagulation.
- **Dr. Abid Iraqi**, Syracuse VAMC was elected a Fellow of the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine.
- **Lisa Large, BSCT (ASCP) IAC**, Cytotechnologist at the Syracuse VAMC has passed the certification exam for ThinPrep (PAP Smear screening) evaluation.
- **Leonard D. Kolakowski**, Environmental Manager, Syracuse VAMC has earned the designation of Certified Healthcare Environmental Services Professional by the American Hospital Association. Kolakowski is one of only 15 certified in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and one of the first 100 certified in the health care industry nationwide.
- **Chaplain Linda Leibhart**, Senior Chaplain, Bath VAMC recently completed 2nd Degree Certification in Usui Reiki Ryoho or the traditional form of Healing Touch.
- Music Therapist, **Barbara MacLean** received a certificate of appreciation from Larry Long, Director, VHA Recreation Therapy Service for her contributions as a member of VA's National Recreation Therapy Service Advisory Board.
- Consumer's Research Council of America selected **Dr. Shirish Patel**, Lead Psychiatrist as one of "America's Top Psychiatrists." The selection process is based on a point value system that awards points to physicians for education, years in practice, affiliations with professional associations, and medical board certifications. Dr Patel's name will be included in the 2002-2003 Consumer Guide.
- VA Western New York Healthcare System (VAWNYHS) at Buffalo, Ophthalmology Department with the expertise of **Dr. Dilip Patel**, performed a surgical procedure that was done for the first time in the Buffalo area. The procedure was a retinal vessel cannulation and infusion of t-PA (clot dissolving medication). This is a relatively new procedure that may improve vision in eyes with vascular occlusion.
- The Women Veterans Healthcare Council has been working on a special project for the past two years. Female veteran and retired Bath VAMC employee, **Rebecca Nussbaumer**, painted a women veterans' historical mural. The oil paint mural depicts a historical collage of several generations of women who served our nation. A special contribution award was presented to Rebecca in recognition of her many dedicated hours in service to the Women Veterans Program. The mural is located at the Bath VAMC, adjacent to the Veterans Service Center, second floor, south end of building 76.
- The FDA inspection of the Blood Bank at the VAWNYHS at Buffalo resulted in no deficiencies.

## Appointments

- **William H. Campbell** was sworn in as the Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **Lorn Gingrich** has been named Social Work Executive for the Stratton VA Medical Center (VAMC).
- **Joan Lucas** has been named Web Assistant.
- **Dr. Brian McCandless** joins the Stratton VAMC as a Nuclear Medicine Physician. He will replace **Dr. Mahin Heravi** who will be retiring on December 31st.
- The Syracuse VAMC announces the following: **Howard Jones**, Radiologic Technologist; **Shawn Marshall**, Imaging Supervisor; and **Jodee Osborne**, secretary.